



**Executive Board of the
United Nations Entity
for Gender Equality and the
Empowerment of Women**

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Evaluation

**Report on the evaluation function of the United Nations
Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of
Women, 2016**

Summary

The report provides information on the performance of the evaluation function at corporate and decentralized levels, as well as the contribution of UN-Women to the United Nations system-wide coordination and national capacity development for gender-responsive evaluation. In addition, the report presents the 2017 programme of work and budget for the Independent Evaluation Office (IEO).

The Executive Board may wish to: (a) take note of the report on the evaluation function of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, 2016 and the programme of work and budget for 2017 of the Independent Evaluation Office; (b) welcome the efforts made by UN-Women and the progress achieved in systematic strengthening of the evaluation function, in leading system-wide gender evaluation efforts, and in fostering innovative partnerships for national evaluation capacity development; (c) request UN-Women, in particular the Independent Evaluation Office, to continue leading United Nations system-wide gender-responsive evaluation efforts and innovative partnerships for national evaluation capacity development; and (d) request UN-Women to develop the new Corporate Evaluation Plan 2018-2021.



"Evaluation everywhere, and at every level, will play a key role in implementing the new development agenda.... The current constrained budgetary climate makes evaluation more important than ever." Ban Ki-moon, former Secretary-General of the United Nations

"We need a culture of evaluation, independent and real-time evaluation with full transparency." Antonio Guterres, Secretary-General of the United Nations

I. Evaluation for sustainable development

1. The adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development raises the bar for integrating gender equality into all aspects of global development and ensuring that 'No one is left behind.' It also has profound implications for evaluation in the United Nations system and beyond as the 2030 Agenda includes a strong call for a follow-up and review mechanism that is gender-sensitive and informed by country-led evaluation. To enhance relevance and fitness for purpose, UN-Women in partnership with the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG), multilateral and bilateral organizations as well as national partners is at the forefront in putting gender-responsive evaluation at the heart of sustainable development.

2. Under the chairship of UN-Women's Independent Evaluation Office (IEO), UNEG revised the ten-year-old Evaluation Norms and Standards. For the first time, the Norms and Standards include a stand-alone norm on human rights and gender equality that calls on evaluators and evaluation managers to ensure that these values are respected, addressed and promoted, underpinning the commitment to the principle of 'No-one left behind'. This new norm is being mainstreamed in UNEG guidance documents, including the revised UNEG evaluation competencies. The revised Norms and Standards also include new norms on national evaluation capacity, professionalization of evaluation functions in the UN system and the commitment to the internationally agreed principles, including the 2030 Agenda. Taking into consideration that the UNEG Norms and Standards are the normative framework that guided evaluation policies and guidance of UN entities, the inclusion of the abovementioned four new norms will enhance the evaluation functions in the UN system.

3. UN-Women's contribution goes beyond the UN system. The 'No one left behind' principle was the key theme of the 2016 High-level Political Forum (HLPF) on Sustainable Development. To promote this commitment, under the leadership of UN-Women, UNEG, EvalGender+, EvalPartners, UNICEF, UNFPA and UNDP organized an official side event of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) convening panel discussions with Ministers, Parliamentarians and representatives of national evaluation systems on gender-responsive evaluation in the service of the SDGs and the Beijing Plan of Action. To support the capacity of countries to evaluate their national sustainable development strategies with a 'No one left behind' lens, UN-Women led EvalGender+ and IOCE (in partnership with UNEG, EvalPartners, UNICEF, UNFPA and the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation) to develop and publish a new guidance document entitled "Evaluating the Sustainable Development Goals with a 'No one left behind' lens through equity-focused and gender-responsive evaluation". Subsequently, UN-Women and its partners developed an initiative to provide technical assistance to 11 countries.

A. Governance of the evaluation function

4. The evaluation policy governs the evaluation function and applies to all initiatives supported by UN-Women, establishing a framework for evaluation that provides credible evidence with respect to the performance of UN-Women in the pursuit of gender equality and the empowerment of women. The evaluation policy is implemented through the Evaluation Strategy 2013-2017 and Corporate Evaluation Plan 2013-2017.

5. The Evaluation Strategy 2013-2017 sets out four strategic areas of work: (a) conducting corporate evaluations and establishing effective corporate evaluation systems; (b) strengthening the decentralized evaluation culture and systems for greater accountability and improved programming; (c) leading United Nations coordination on gender-responsive evaluation to generate system-wide accountability; and (d) supporting national evaluation capacity-building for gender responsive evaluation. Meanwhile, the Corporate Evaluation Plan provides a time-bound framework within which useful evaluation evidence is generated systematically on the performance of work under the UN-Women Strategic Plan 2014-2017.

6. To further strengthen the independence and credibility of the evaluation function, the Global Evaluation Advisory Committee (GEAC) provides independent advice on the direction and overall performance of the evaluation function. In 2016, the Committee reviewed the performance of the evaluation function and provided advice on the design of the Corporate Evaluation Plan 2018-2021, the Evaluation Strategy 2018-2021, and the strategy for facilitating use of evaluation, including through improved communication.

7. The Committee assessed that IEO is providing inspiring leadership on evaluation within the UN system and more widely through extensive partnerships and networks, maximizing use of UN-Women's limited resources to catalyze and stimulate action on evaluation at all levels. Overall, the Committee assessed that the evaluation function in UN-Women has advanced to a high level of performance, with systems and staff capable of sustaining this high standard over time. It also recognized the considerable efforts across management in carrying forward work on evaluation and acting on evaluation findings and recommendations¹.

8. Emphasizing a shared responsibility for the evaluation function, the Committee directed recommendations to management and IEO. Management was recommended to a) continue to systematically uptake evaluation evidence in planning and programming as well as in advocacy and partnerships, articulating a clear demand for the kind of evidence it needs to inform its work, as well as how and where this may be needed; b) request IEO to deliver at least two corporate evaluations each year; c) build evaluation into corporate strategic planning; and, d) respect and maintain the distinct but complementary roles of audit, investigation, evaluation and monitoring in carrying forward effective oversight of UN-Women's work. Welcoming the new IEO's strategy for enhancing the use of evaluation through various communication initiatives, the committee recommended IEO to a) further enhance evaluation use through information systems technology; b) protect adequate throughput of corporate evaluations; c) refresh and deepen the Evaluation Strategy 2014-2017, and d) continue efforts to support the strengthening of monitoring capacities.²

¹ GEAC letter to UN-Women Executive Director, December 2016

² GEAC letter to UN-Women Executive Director, December 2016

B. Performance of the evaluation function

9. Over the last four years, the global evaluation oversight system (GEOS) has been used to track organization-wide performance on the evaluation function, including trends over time. To ensure real-time actions are implemented to address shortcomings, the quarterly GEOS dashboard with nine key performance indicators was shared with senior management at headquarters and field offices.

Table 1

Trends in key performance indicators, 2013-2016

Key performance indicator	Description	2013	2014	2015	2016	Target (by 2017)	Overall assessment
		(percentage)					
Financial resources invested in evaluation function	Evaluation expenditure over UN-Women programme expenditure	1.3	2.2	2.0	2.9 ¹	3.0	On track
Human resources for monitoring and evaluation	Offices that appointed monitoring and evaluation focal point or officer	83.0	98.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	Achieved
Evaluation coverage	Offices that conducted at least one evaluation since 2011	67.0	68.0	71.0	84.0	100.0	On track
Evaluation implementation rate	Percentage of evaluations implemented	83.0	71.0	76.0	84.0	95.0	On track
Quality of evaluations	Percentage of evaluations rated "satisfactory and above"	85.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	Achieved
Evaluation reports posted on GATE	Percentage of completed evaluation reports posted on GATE	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	Achieved
Management response submission to GATE	Percentage of completed evaluation reports submitted with management response to GATE	85.0	86.0	86.0	94.0	100.0	On track
Implementation of management response	Percentage of management response key actions being implemented	88.0	83.0	85.0	94.0	90.0	Achieved
Use of evaluations	Percentage of offices that reported using evaluation	-	71.0	75.0	-	90.0	---

Source: Global evaluation oversight system.

Abbreviation: GATE, Global Accountability and Tracking of Evaluation Use system.

¹ The figure for 2016 is calculated using the new methodology, and therefore it's not comparable to previous years. Please see paragraph 11 and 12 for additional information.

10. Since the establishment of GEOS, steady and sustained progress on all key performance indicators has been registered⁴. In particular, evaluation coverage increased from 71 per cent in 2015 to 84 per cent in 2016, while implementation of planned evaluations increased from 76 per cent in 2015 to 84 per cent in 2016. Considerable progress was also made in the quality of evaluation reports, with 83 per cent (30 evaluations out of 36) assessed as 'good' or 'very good' quality. The submission of management responses reached 94 per cent, while 94 per cent of committed actions in management responses for evaluations completed the preceding year were being implemented. Although significant progress has been made in all KPIs, there remains variation across regions and more work needs to be done in respect to geographic and thematic coverage of evaluations, implementation of planned evaluations and timely preparation of management response.

Key performance indicator 1: financial resources

11. Since 2013, annual reports on the evaluation function have included data on spending on evaluation. While the methodology used to calculate investment in the evaluation function was consistent through 2015, a new methodology was adopted in 2016⁵. The change in methodology was necessary to ensure full alignment with the evaluation policy. The new method uses 'programme expenditure'⁶ instead of 'total expenditure' to estimate the proportion of evaluation spending.

12. For consistency with figures provided in previous annual reports, table 2 presents the data for the period 2013-2015 using 'total expenditure' as a denominator, while data for 2016 used 'programme expenditure'. 'Programme expenditures' excludes cost classification categories funded from the Institutional Budget (development effectiveness, UN coordination, and management) as well as funding received from the regular budget (assessed contribution) in support of normative work. Thus, 2016 data is not comparable with previous years.

13. Overall estimated investment on evaluation in 2016 amounted to \$7.3 million. This represents 2.9 per cent of the total UN-Women 'programme expenditure'. Spending on decentralized evaluation in 2016 has increased against the previous year. In addition to the direct investment made by field offices to the decentralized evaluations, 33 per cent of the IEO budget was spent to support the decentralized evaluation function mainly through the regional evaluation specialists. Altogether, decentralized evaluation function accounted for 51 per cent of the total spending on evaluation. In 2016, IEO mobilized 17 per cent of its budget from donor contributions dedicated mainly to supporting gender responsive national evaluation systems.

⁴ Due to glitches in the corporate Results Management Systems, data on evaluation use for 2016 was not captured in the annual reporting by offices. However, an independent assessment of Strategic Notes and Annual Reports commissioned by the Programme Division provides ample evidence on the extent to which offices are using evidence and lessons from evaluations to inform new programming and to support results reporting. Details on this are provided under the decentralized evaluation function section in this report.

⁵ Report on the evaluation function of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, 2015 (UNW/2016/5), para 14-16.

⁶ Programme expenditure is defined as the total amount of expenditure against 'programme activities', as defined by the harmonized cost classification and funding framework approved by the UN-Women Executive Board (2013/2) and used in the UN-Women Integrated Budget document. As per this framework, programme activities relate to projects and programmes funded from regular programme and other resources only, excluding the other cost classification categories funded from the Institutional Budget (development effectiveness, UN Coordination, and management) as well as funding received from the regular budget (assessed contribution) in support of normative work.

Table 2
Evaluation function expenditure, 2013 - 2016
 (United States dollars)

	2013	2014	2015	2016
Total UN-Women expenditure	269,660,584	270,537,900	315,101,084	254,413,520
Total expenditure in evaluation	3,576,396	5,917,163	6,272,545	7,391,573
IEO	2,123,750	4,499,942	4,621,818	5,377,637
Decentralized evaluations ⁸	1,226,729	1,417,221	1,650,727	2,013,936
Total evaluation expenditure (percentage)	1.3	2.2	2.0	2.9 ⁹

Source: "Total UN-Women expenditure" and "IEO expenditures" figures were generated from ATLAS by the Division of Management and Administration (DMA). Figures for decentralized evaluations were calculated on the basis of official figures by DMA and supplemented by data obtained from field offices.

Key performance indicator 2: human resources

14. The staffing profile in IEO remained similar to previous years. In 2016, IEO was composed of 16 staff members: 10 based at headquarters, and 6 regional evaluation specialists based in the regional offices. In accordance with the evaluation policy, regional evaluation specialists are IEO staff deployed in regional offices with a direct reporting line to the IEO Director.

15. At the field level, 100 per cent of field offices have appointed either an M&E officer or focal points¹⁰. In 2016, 45 per cent of offices reported having at least one M&E officer while the remaining 55 per cent appointed M&E focal point. Overall, this largely represents a stable trend over the previous years, especially in Africa, where over 50 per cent of offices have appointed M&E officers. The distribution shows that offices with a relatively bigger portfolio tend to have a dedicated M&E officer. This is a promising arrangement in terms of strengthening results-based management systems and a culture of evaluation. However, frequent changes of M&E focal points have been noted. This has implications on continuous training, experience, and dedication to M&E tasks.

⁷ This figure refers to "programme" expenditure and not "total" expenditure as in previous years. Please see paragraph 11 and 12 for additional information.

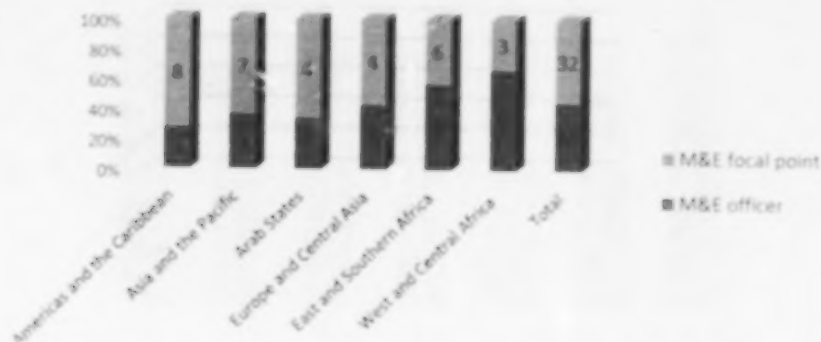
⁸ Estimated costs for decentralized evaluations included a broad range categories such as evaluation studies, capacity development on M&E, portion of M&E staff/focal point cost and communication and dissemination of evaluation products.

⁹ The figure for 2016 is calculated using the new methodology, and therefore it's not comparable to previous years. Please see paragraph 11 and 12 for additional information.

¹⁰ M&E focal points are staff who perform M&E functions on top of their main designated function.

Figure 1

Human resources for monitoring and evaluation officers/focal points by region

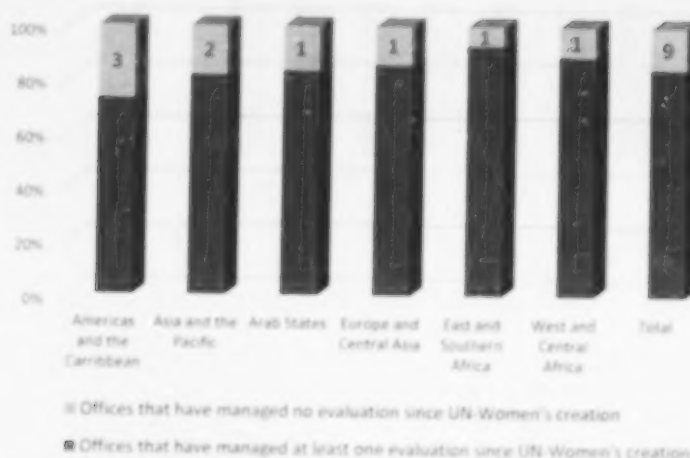


Source: Global evaluation oversight system.

Abbreviation: M&E, Monitoring and Evaluation.

Key performance indicator 3: coverage and types of evaluations

16. 2016 witnessed an upward trend in coverage of evaluations. 84 per cent of offices conducted at least one evaluation during the period 2011-2016, representing a 13 per cent increase as compared to 2015. Offices in East and Southern Africa, West and Central Africa, Arab States, Europe and Central Asia had the highest percentage of countries with at least one evaluation, while the Americas and the Caribbean had the lowest. Despite the notable progress made, nine offices (16 per cent) have not yet conducted any evaluation since the creation of UN-Women. Underestimation of time and resources during evaluation planning, security and humanitarian situations, and limited capacity to manage evaluations were cited as setbacks to achieving full compliance. Buy-in and commitment of country representatives is also a principal factor for driving positive change on the demand for evidence from evaluations.

Figure 2**Evaluation coverage by region, 2011-2016**

Source: Global evaluation oversight system.

17. The majority of evaluations were designed to assess outcome-level results. In 2016, four regional thematic evaluations covering multiple countries were completed in the Americas and the Caribbean, Europe and Central Asia, West and Central Africa and Arab States regions. Asia and the Pacific region also completed three regional programme evaluations covering various multi-level programmes. All thematic areas were well covered by the body of evaluations. In total, 25 (46 per cent) reports considered "ending violence against women" and "women's economic empowerment" while 20 (37 per cent) reports focused on "peace and security and humanitarian actions" and "leadership and political participation." The least number of evaluations focused on "national planning and budgeting" (11 per cent) and the "contribution of UN-Women to global norms and standards" (6 per cent), which is attuned with resources allocations in UN-Women¹¹. Due to their nature, corporate, regional and country portfolio evaluations addressed multiple impact areas. The list of evaluations considered in the analysis are provided in Annex 1.

Key performance indicator 4: implementation rate of planned evaluations

18. Overall, implementation of planned evaluations in 2016 has shown steady improvement over previous years. Of the 81 evaluations planned in 2016, 84 per cent were being implemented (44 per cent completed and 40 per cent ongoing). 36 evaluations were completed, including two corporate evaluations, implying a 13 per cent increase from the previous year.

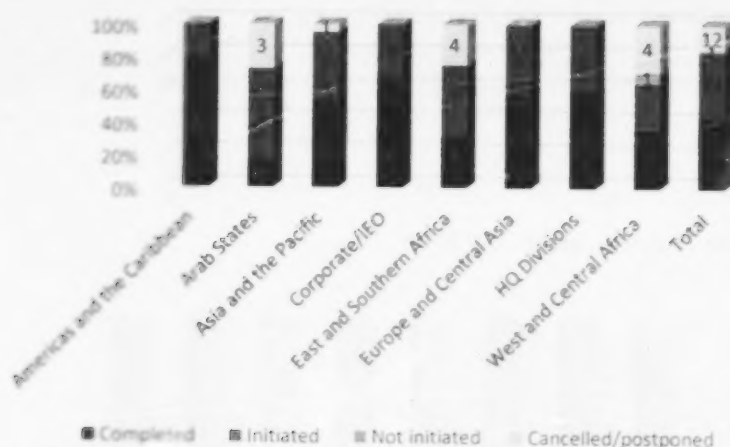
19. However, a total of 16 per cent of the evaluations planned were not implemented (1 per cent not initiated and 15 per cent cancelled and/or postponed). Reasons for late initiation and cancellation were ambitious planning, unavailability of suitable consultants with gender and evaluation skills, and underestimation of time and resources during planning. Deferral of evaluations was also necessitated due to humanitarian and crisis situations, and extension of programmes. Although some of the causes are beyond the control of offices, greater attention is required at

¹¹ The figures include evaluations addressing multiple impact areas.

the evaluation planning phase to ensure a more strategic and realistic selection of evaluations.

Figure 3

Evaluation implementation rate, 2016



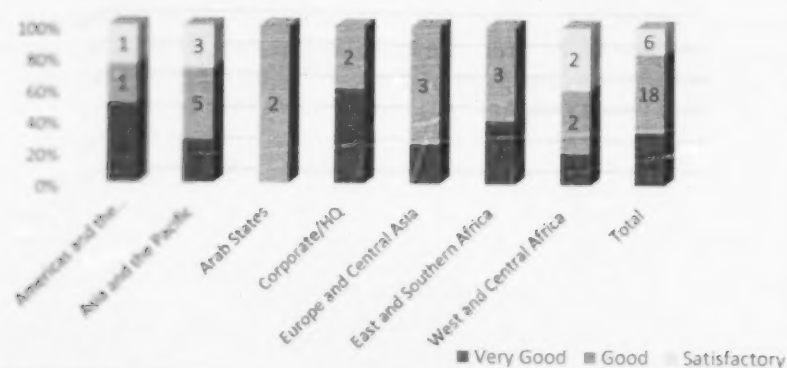
Source: Global evaluation oversight system.

Key performance indicator 5: quality of evaluation reports

20. The average quality of evaluations has risen year-on-year, with the proportion of reports rated 'good' and 'very good' increasing from 72 per cent in 2014 to 83 per cent in 2016. Continuing the trend from the previous year, there were no reports that were unsatisfactory, suggesting that the quality assurance mechanisms put in place are sustaining a performance floor in successfully preventing poor-quality evaluations from being implemented. The list of evaluations considered including individual quality ratings is provided in Annex 1.

Figure 4

Quality of evaluations, 2016



Source: Global Evaluation Assessment and Analysis System

Key performance indicator 6: submission rate of completed evaluation reports to the Global Accountability and Tracking of Evaluation Use system (GATE)

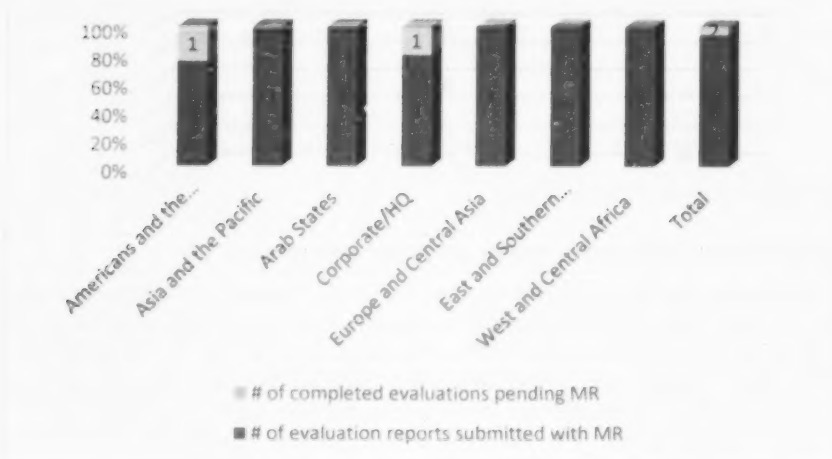
21. Continuing the trend since 2013, 100 per cent of completed evaluations were posted in the Global Accountability and Tracking of Evaluation Use system.

Key performance indicator 7: management response submissions to the Global Accountability and Tracking of Evaluation Use system

22. Of 36 evaluations completed in 2016, 34 (94 per cent) had a management response as required by the evaluation policy. All regions have almost achieved full compliance.

Figure 5

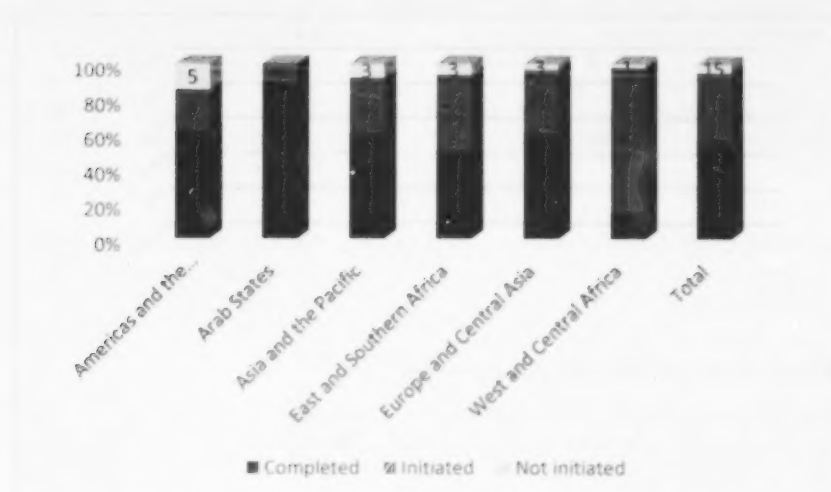
Management response submission, 2016



Source: Global Evaluation Accountability and Tracking of Use system

Key performance indicator 8: implementation of management response

23. 2016 saw a continuing positive trend towards more recommendations reported as completed or initiated. Out of the 301 committed actions included in the management response, 94 per cent were being implemented: 57 per cent completed and 37 per cent were ongoing. However, the remaining 6 per cent are yet to be initiated including those that had passed their due dates (3 per cent).

Figure 6**Implementation of evaluation management response/key actions, 2016**

Source: Global Evaluation Accountability and Tracking of Evaluation Use

C. Corporate evaluations

24. IEO continued its ongoing efforts to ensure quality and timely delivery of corporate evaluations in 2016, following the schedule of the Corporate Evaluation Plan. IEO presented to the Executive Board the reports of two corporate evaluations: a) evaluation of UN-Women's contribution to the United Nations system coordination on gender equality and the empowerment of women and b) meta-analysis of evaluations managed by UN-Women in 2014 and 2015.

25. By the end of 2016, the implementation rate for corporate evaluations in 2016-2017 was 100 per cent. As presented in table 3, out of six planned evaluative studies, four were 'completed' and two were 'on track'.

Table 3**Implementation status of planned corporate evaluations, 2016-2017**

Title of evaluative study	Status	Additional information
1. Evaluation of UN-Women's contribution to the United Nations system coordination on gender equality and the empowerment of women	Completed	Presented to the Executive Board at the second regular session, 2016
2. Meta-analysis of evaluations managed by UN-Women in 2015	Completed	Presented to the Executive Board at the second regular session, 2016

3.	Evaluation of UN-Women's regional architecture	Completed	Presented to the Executive Board at the first regular session, 2017
4.	Evaluation of UN-Women's strategic partnerships	Completed	To be presented to the Executive Board at the annual session, 2017
5.	Meta-analysis of evaluations managed by UN-Women in 2016	On track	To be presented to the Executive Board at the second regular session, 2017
6.	Evaluation of UN-Women's support to political participation	On track	To be presented to the Executive Board at the first regular, 2018

Use of corporate evaluation to foster change

26. The use of evaluation findings and recommendations is one of the key priorities. Each year, IEO follows up with key UN-Women stakeholders involved in corporate evaluations conducted two years earlier to capture how corporate evaluations contributed to changes in UN-Women policies, strategies and practices.

Evaluation of UN-Women's support to women's economic empowerment

27. Since the evaluation of UN-Women's contribution to Women's Economic Empowerment (WEE) was presented to the Executive Board (UNW/2015/CPR. 7) in 2015, significant progress has been made across the recommendations areas. To enhance UN-Women staff's capacity to engage strategically with macro-economic issues, the Women's Economic Empowerment section developed a course on Gender and Economics. The first pilot course was implemented at the ITC-ILO Training Centre in Turin (Italy), bringing together UN-Women representatives from 21 countries and regional offices. In addition, UN-Women reviewed its strategic partnership with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) on gender-responsive budgeting. That led UN-Women to track more systematically the impact of budgetary decisions on women at country-level and critically examine the economic impact of austerity-driven policies on the goods/services produced by women, especially in rural and remote communities.

28. In line with the evaluation recommendation on guiding UN-Women's work on WEE explicitly based on a rights-based approach, UN-Women conceptualised the Flagship Programming Initiatives (FPIs) that are grounded on a rights-based approach. The move to FPIs also addressed the recommendation on strengthening leadership and strategic focus by consolidating multiple, small-scale projects and using a more long-term holistic approach to deliver greater impact. Finally, the Knowledge Gateway has been improved to connect a wider range of stakeholders to deepen and broaden content, and facilitate linkages.

Evaluation of UN-Women's normative support work

29. The corporate evaluation of UN-Women's normative support work and its operational linkages (UNW/2015/CPR. 13)¹² was completed in 2015 and made four broad recommendations against which there has been broad progress. The FPIs

¹² The Corporate Evaluation of UN-Women's Normative Support Work and its Operational Linkages was undertaken by OIOS with the support of the UN-Women IEO.

provided a more cohesive theoretical framework for UN-Women's work and steps are being taken to make linkages between the normative and operational more systemic as part of the development of the new Strategic Plan.

30. There is also indication that the evaluation has influenced steps taken to strengthen the coordination between UN-Women's two pillars/bureaux; the creation of the Executive Leadership Team; and, introduction of matrixed reporting lines. As a measure to improve internal communications, a new dedicated staff has been recruited, a CoP for the FPIs created and Yammer used to enhance internal communication.

D. Decentralized evaluation system

31. About 90 per cent of UN-Women evaluations are managed by field offices, reflecting the decentralized nature of the organization. This ensures that the evaluation function generates country-specific evidence relevant to inform UN-Women's approaches at the national level. However, it also poses a challenge to ensure evaluations at the country level meet internationally agreed evaluation standards, such as the ones endorsed by UNEG.

32. In 2016, various oversight, technical and capacity development supports were provided by IEO to enhance the credibility, impartiality, quality and use of decentralized evaluations. This has proven effective and resulted in significant improvements in all evaluation key performance indicators as reported above.

Systems to improve the quality, credibility and use of decentralized evaluations

33. Given the fact the decentralized evaluation is a shared function, IEO intensified its collaboration with regional offices and the Programme Division. Regional analysis of the global evaluation oversight system dashboard with country-specific breakdowns on evaluation performance indicators was communicated quarterly to regional and country offices. To improve further compliance, selected performance indicators have been included in the Country Office Assessment Tool (COAT). Periodic progress updates were jointly communicated to offices by IEO and the Programme Division. This collaboration has proven effective in stimulating the demand for evidence and creating a conducive environment for sustained improvement of the decentralized evaluation function.

34. The global evaluation reports assessment and analysis system (GERAAS) continued to be used as key instrument to assure the quality and credibility of decentralized evaluations. Through this system, IEO provided assessments of the quality of evaluation reports and individualized feedback to 17 concerned offices and all regional offices to ensure continuous improvement of future evaluations. The best evaluations were promoted organization-wide to further disseminate evaluation reports and promote positive reinforcement among offices. Furthermore, oversight and technical quality assurance supports covering key evaluation milestones were implemented in all regions by regional evaluation specialists.

35. To ensure that decentralized evaluations inform UN-Women global policies and strategies, a meta-analysis of all evaluations managed by UN-Women was published. To further promote its use, a joint webinar by IEO and the Programme Division was organized to reflect on the management perspective to enhance performance. In addition, a series of knowledge products and region-specific meta-analysis were produced by regional offices. For example, East and Southern Africa and the Americas and the Caribbean regions produced knowledge management

booklets based on evidence captured in the body of evaluation reports. A similar exercise was initiated in other regions.

36. Several offices embraced the new country portfolio evaluation approach introduced in 2015. In 2016, seven country portfolio evaluations were initiated and two completed. The shift towards more strategic evaluations allowed generation of relevant and timely evaluation evidence and lessons to deliver more effective and efficient programming.

37. IEO continued to manage the Global Accountability and Tracking of Evaluation Use system (GATE). The online portal served as an accountability tool for storing all evaluation reports and tracking implementation of management responses. In 2016, the system was upgraded with a new search function for recommendations based on thematic areas and selected organizational priorities and principles.

38. IEO continued to provide technical assistance and oversight to the development of decentralized evaluation plans, which continued to be an integral component of the country and regional planning and approval processes. To facilitate synergies and enhance efficiency, for the first time, an integrated global evaluation plan was developed.

39. Identification of consultants with the required experience in both gender and evaluation has been a continuous challenge for both UN-Women and its partners. Thus, in 2016, UN-Women launched the Gender Evaluation Consultant Database providing a link between prospective consultants and institutions in need of evaluators with gender and human rights expertise. Currently, the database has around 70 vetted consultants (out of the 800 applications received) that have publicly searchable profiles. 35 per cent of consultant database members reported that prospective employers have reached out to them after viewing their profile online and 11 per cent of these resulted in contracts.

Internal evaluation capacity development

40. Internal capacity for evaluation is being bolstered towards developing a culture that promotes use, accountability and learning from evaluation. As part of the different integrated systems established to strengthen the decentralized evaluation function, consistent technical and other advisory support including co-management arrangement for country portfolio evaluations were performed by regional evaluation specialists. In addition, an M&E community of practices has been maintained to facilitate the exchange of experience and expertise across regions.

41. As part of the professionalization initiative to strengthen the evaluation function, IEO focused on encouraging M&E staff participation in the eLearning course: How to Manage Gender-Responsive Evaluation. 55 per cent of offices have completed the course and received certification of completion. Europe and Central Asia has successfully achieved 100 per cent of M&E Focal Point completion. The eLearning course is also publicly accessible, and by the end of December 2016, 1,223 individuals had enrolled, which is more than double the number enrolled by 2015. The course satisfaction survey illustrated that the majority felt that the course met their expectations (89 per cent), and that the course will help them to integrate gender equality into their daily work routine (85 per cent).

Enhance communication to facilitate use of evaluation

42. In 2016, IEO developed a new communication strategy, with the objective of going beyond the traditional approach of evaluation reports' dissemination to include a more comprehensive and innovative communication approach aimed at

improving engagement with evaluation users, and eventually increasing evaluation use. Although it is too early to assess its outcome, a 10 per cent surge in the number of returning website visitors, and a 35 per cent increase in the average time spent on the IEO's website page have been noted since the advent of the strategy.

43. Within the strategy, IEO produced new innovative products such as video and magazines, dialogue with users through events and webinars, presence on social media, and a dynamic website. These new products proved successful. For example, the views of a video on "how gender-responsive evaluation can contribute to the sustainable development goals" was 78 per cent higher than other videos on the same YouTube channel, suggesting its success in both delivering relevant content, and reaching interested audiences.

44. IEO continued to produce *Transform* – the magazine for gender-responsive evaluation. During 2016, three issues of *Transform* were published featuring the role of gender-responsive evaluation in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development to ensure the principle of 'No one left behind', and the results and lessons learned from corporate evaluations and meta-analysis on UN-Women evaluations. Website and social media analytics show that web pages and posts related to *Transform* are among the most viewed and interacted with. Altogether, five webinars, seven publications, 28 announcements, and 14 presentations were made, reaching hundreds of participants across the UN system and beyond.

45. In terms of facilitating use of evaluation, IEO also started to provide strategic targeted evidence to inform specific decision by managers. For example, IEO provided analysis of key evaluation findings and recommendations to inform the mid-term review of the 2014-2017 Strategic Plan, as well as the design of the new Strategic Plan 2018-2021.

46. The focus on use of evaluation in informing decisions at the decentralized level prompted a steady increase in the use of lessons from evaluations to inform better and more strategic programme objectives, as demonstrated by an external assessment of the 'quality of results-based management in UN-Women's planning and reporting processes'.¹³

I. United Nations system-wide coordination of gender-responsive evaluation

47. In 2016, UN-Women intensified its support of system-wide coordination on gender responsive evaluation mainly through the five areas presented below.

A. United Nations Evaluation Group and regional United Nations evaluation groups

48. UN-Women IEO continued to lead efforts to strengthen demand, supply and use of evaluation across the UN system and beyond by chairing the United Nations Evaluation Group since March, 2015. Under UN-Women IEO leadership, UNEG positioned itself as a strategic player within and beyond the UN system. Important progress was made by ensuring human rights and gender-equality are front and

¹³ An independent qualitative assessment of UN-Women's Strategic Notes and Annual Reports was commissioned by the Planning and Programme Guidance Unit (PPGU) of the Programme Division, UN-Women. The assessment covers approved Strategic Notes and Annual Work Plans adopted between 2014- 2016 and Annual Reports prepared by all field offices for the period 2013-2015.

central in evaluation in the UN system through the inclusion of a stand-alone norm in the updated UNEG Norms and Standards and as reflected in the updated Competencies for Evaluators in the UN system.

49. UNEG organized several key events in 2016 with the aim of enhancing capacities to evaluate the 2030 Agenda. In March 2016, evaluators and statisticians from governments, civil society and UN agencies were brought together for the first time to discuss "No one left behind – evaluating SDGs with an equity focused and gender responsive lens" as a side-event of the CSW. During UNEG week in April 2016, a high-level event called "Evaluation fit for the 2030 Agenda" brought together key leaders, policy-makers and evaluators to discuss key priorities for evaluation of the SDGs. A session dedicated to 'No one left behind' approaches in evaluation was organized as part of the UNEG Evaluation Practice Exchange. IEO also supported work across all strategic objectives of the UNEG work plan ensuring the promotion and mainstreaming of gender equality.

50. IEO, through its regional evaluation specialists, remained an active member in regional United Nations evaluation networks and platforms, with the aim of promoting gender-responsive evaluations, system-wide coherence in evaluation and strengthening field staff skills. In particular, IEO continued to provide leadership to regional United Nations evaluation groups in the Asia and Pacific, Americas and the Caribbean, and Africa regions.

B. United Nations System-wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women

51. UN-Women continued co-leading the UNEG Task Force on Gender Equality and Human Rights to support UNEG members in reporting against the Evaluation Performance Indicator of the UN-SWAP. Through the Task Force, IEO provided leadership in producing a synthesis report of the reporting trends across UN entities, presented results at the 2016 UNEG Evaluation Practice Exchange and Annual General Meeting, provided bilateral technical guidance and managed an Independent Review of UN SWAP EPI reporting.

52. The 2016 UN-SWAP reporting cycle demonstrated that entities are placing emphasis on integrating gender equality in evaluation systems. Of the 43 entities that reported the evaluation indicator was applicable, 16 per cent (7) reported "exceeds requirements"; 42 per cent (18) reported "meets requirements"; 35 per cent (15) reported "approaches requirements" and 7 per cent (3) reported "missing requirements". While this denotes an improvement in the ratings over last year, it should be noted that 28 per cent (12) of these entities did not follow the UNEG endorsed process for scoring evaluation reports against the UN-SWAP criteria.

53. An external independent assessment of all UN-Women evaluation reports against the UN System-wide Action Plan Evaluation Performance Indicator (EPI) revealed a strong improvement in the integration of gender equality and women's empowerment across all aspects of evaluation reports. In 2016, UN-Women reported "meeting requirements" with a score of 8.40, a significant improvement over the previous year. Several reasons may account for the overall improvement in 2016: a) enforcement of quality standards by regional evaluation specialists throughout evaluation processes; b) strict recruitment criteria for evaluators with a mix of gender and evaluation skills; and, c) implementation of the professionalization programme.

C. Independent system-wide evaluation

54. The key objective of the independent system-wide evaluation (ISWE) is to strengthen the functions, systems and mechanisms for management and conduct of independent, credible and useful system-wide evaluations for development effectiveness. In 2016 UN-Women actively participated and served as a member of the management group in two system-wide evaluations: a) the evaluation of the United Nations system contribution to strengthening national capacities for statistics, and b) the meta-evaluation and synthesis of United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF). Both evaluations were presented by the Joint Inspection Unit to ECOSOC in October 2016. In addition, based on the key findings of the UNDAF meta-evaluation, IEO collaborated with UNEG members and made contributions to reviewing and providing substantive comments on the new Interim UNDAF Guidance with a focus on evaluation.

D. Supporting joint evaluations and the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF)

55. Driven by the need for greater UN system-wide coherence, UN-Women supported the integration of gender equality across UN interagency evaluation work, including in joint programmes and UNDAF evaluations. Within the framework of regional evaluation groups, UN-Women provided technical and advisory services, such as a review of draft terms of reference and evaluation reports, to 14 UNDAF evaluations. Training sessions were also organized jointly with UN agencies at the regional level to enhance gender-responsive evaluation capacity of UN staff and partners.

E. Platforms in support of gender-responsive evaluation

56. The gender equality evaluation portal website continued to be a key resource regarding what works and what does not work for gender equality. The website provides access to 510 evaluation reports linking evaluative evidence with the critical areas of concern of the Beijing Platform for Action, and the UN-Women Evaluation Handbook, providing both theory and practice. The majority of reports are from the United Nations system, while one third of the reports come from academia, foundations, bilateral institutions, intergovernmental mechanisms and multilateral development banks.

II. Supporting national gender-responsive evaluation capacities

A. The global evaluation agenda

57. The Global Evaluation Agenda 2016-2020 sets the first ever long term global vision for the global evaluation community. The Agenda has been developed by many stakeholders around the globe, working together under the EvalPartners umbrella. Following a systemic approach, the four essential dimensions of the Agenda are to foster: (a) an enabling environment, (b) institutional capacities, (c) individual capacities, and (d) inter-linkages among these first three dimensions. The 'No one left behind' principle, including gender equality, is embedded as a key value that guides the entire Agenda.

58. The Agenda continued to provide inspiration and mobilized various national actors, international organizations and United Nations organizations to strengthen

evaluation for "a transformed global community characterized by transparency, accountability, and progress towards the common good".

59. UN-Women continued to be a leader in EvalPartners, the global multi-stakeholder partnership for national evaluation capacity development, by co-leading EvalGender+, a global partnership composed of 37 organizations that aims to strengthen gender-responsive evaluations. EvalGender+ established itself as a unique movement to advocate for equity-focused and gender-responsive evaluation for the SDGs.

B. Strengthening the enabling environment for evaluation

60. As co-leader of EvalGender+, UN-Women strengthened strategic alliance with various partners and evaluation associations to reinforce nationally owned and driven evaluation systems with a gender responsive lens. In 2016, UN-Women and EvalGender+ launched a series of initiatives focusing on evaluating the Sustainable Development Goals with a "No one left behind" lens. The initiative was implemented through a multi-stakeholder process which included an online consultation, a high level and technical event, and technical assistance to 11 countries on how to evaluate SDGs with a gender-responsive and an equity-focused lens. These include Burkina Faso, Cambodia, Colombia, Kenya, Kyrgyzstan, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Tunisia, Zimbabwe and the Asia-Pacific Evaluation Association and EvalMENA network. The high-level events held in New York brought together government delegations, parliamentarians and development actors. These intensive engagements culminated in the development of a guidance and training package titled "Evaluating the Sustainable Development Goals with a 'No one left behind' lens".

C. Strengthening institutional capacities for the demand, management and use of evaluations

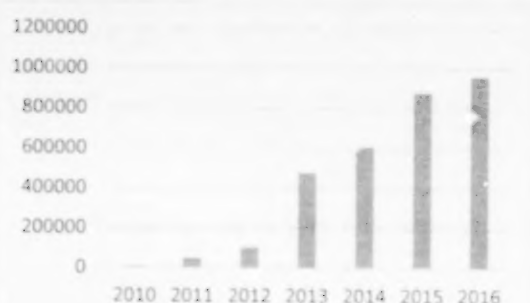
61. Within its national evaluation capacity development pillar, UN-Women supported various initiatives across regions to strengthen a gender-responsive national evaluation system. For instance, in the Americas and the Caribbean region, UN-Women provided extensive technical and capacity development support in Colombia, Costa Rica, Argentina, Ecuador and the Dominican Republic. The support ranged from integration of gender equality and human rights perspectives in the evaluation of public policies to strengthening the national gender responsive M&E system and capacity development training. A similar initiative in Zimbabwe helped development of a national M&E framework for gender equality. These uniquely integrated initiatives and activities are expected to augment efforts by government and non-state actors towards strengthening existing and establishing new gender responsive national monitoring and evaluation systems.

D. Strengthening individual capacities of evaluators to conduct credible and useful gender-responsive evaluations

62. A range of innovative and cost-effective technologies continued to be used to bolster individual capacities of evaluators to conduct credible and useful gender-responsive evaluations. In particular, the EvalPartners web portal, "MyM&E", attracted a massive number of evaluators and interested practitioners around the globe. Since its launch, the portal registered a cumulative total of 961,538 visitors, up by 20 per cent from the year before. Cumulative page downloads also reached

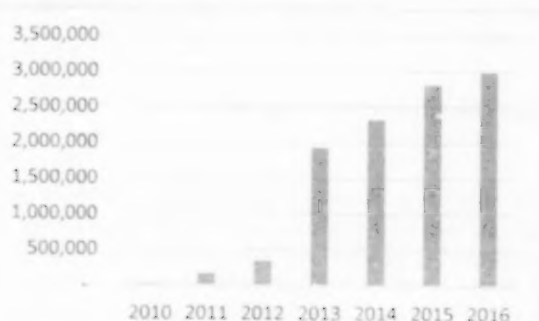
over 3 million. The massive open online course on development evaluation continued to stimulate high traffic to the portal. The course reached a cumulative total of 27,513 registered participants from 178 countries. Of the nine courses available on the platform, the equity-focused and gender-responsive evaluation course stood out as the most preferred course with 3,427 registered participants.

Figure 7: Total cumulative number of visitors to the EvalPartners "MyM&E" platform



Source: MyM&E statistics, December 2016

Figure 9: Total cumulative number of page downloads from the EvalPartners "MyM&E" platform



Source: MyM&E statistics, December 2016

63. In addition, the EvalGender+ community of practice continued to be a key platform to continuously discuss topics and exchange information related to gender and evaluation. In 2016, the number of members of the network reached 2,818.

III. The 2017 Independent Evaluation Office programme of work

64. In 2017, IEO will continue its work, as outlined in the Evaluation Strategy 2014-2017, in the four key results areas outlined below, with a particular focus on the 2030 Agenda. In line with the UN-Women strategic planning cycle, IEO will develop a new Evaluation Strategy 2018-2021 and a new Corporate Evaluation Plan 2018-2021.

A. Implementation of effective corporate evaluations

65. In 2017, IEO will present to the Executive Board the findings of two corporate evaluations on: a) UN-Women's regional architecture and b) UN-Women's strategic partnerships for gender equality and empowerment of women. IEO will undertake one major corporate evaluation on women's political participation and will initiate another corporate evaluation on governance and national planning that will be completed in 2018. IEO will also conduct and present a meta-analysis of corporate and decentralized evaluations managed by UN-Women in 2016. To enhance further the utility of corporate evaluations, IEO will continue implementing its communication strategy. The Transform magazine, newsletter, evaluation briefs and social media will continue to be an important means for disseminating evaluation findings. IEO will continue to explore and develop innovative and gender-responsive evaluation methodologies.

B. Implementation of effective decentralized evaluation systems

66. IEO will continue strengthening its decentralized systems and practices through a) managing regional and country portfolio evaluations; b) continuous oversight and technical support to decentralized evaluations; c) the professionalization initiative with emphasis on mentorship to evaluation managers; and d) quality assurance mechanisms, including the global evaluation oversight system, the global evaluation reports assessment and analysis system, and the roster of gender-responsive evaluators. Knowledge management systems, including the evaluation community of practice, the GATE system, and the Gender Equality Evaluation website, will be maintained.

C. Promotion of United Nations coordination on gender responsive evaluation

67. IEO will continue to provide leadership and actively participate in UNEG and regional United Nations evaluation groups. IEO will continue to take part in UNEG taskforces to ensure mainstreaming of gender equality across inter-agency evaluation work, including its support to United Nations entities on the evaluation performance indicator of the UN-SWAP by providing technical guidance, training, and facilitating exchange among UN entities.

D. Strengthening national evaluation capacities for gender-responsive evaluation systems

68. IEO will continue supporting national gender-responsive evaluation capacity development through EvalGender+ and EvalPartners. It will provide leadership to the organization of the third EvalPartners Global Forum to be held at the Parliament of Kyrgyzstan. IEO will strategically use its role as Co-Chair of EvalGender+ to advocate for gender-responsive national evaluation systems. It will scale-up the piloting of a guidance document on evaluating SDGs and intensify its technical assistance to selected countries to evaluate localized SDGs with a gender lens.

E. Approved budget for the 2017 Independent Evaluation Office programme of work

69. The total IEO budget for 2017 is \$4,453,546. The budget is comprised of three funding categories: institutional budget, core programmable and non-core resources.

70. The institutional budget of \$3,037,387 covers the salaries of 11 staff and key activities of the work plan: company contracts for evaluation studies in 2017; office operational costs; support to decentralized evaluation systems; support to United Nations coordination on gender-responsive evaluation; and national evaluation capacity development on gender-responsive evaluation. In addition to the institutional budget, the salaries of five regional evaluation specialists are covered through core resources of \$1,000,000.

71. IEO also received \$416,158 non-core funds from Switzerland to strengthen the internal evaluation function and to support the integration of a gender lens in the evaluation of the Sustainable Development Goals.

Annex I**Evaluations completed in 2016**

Annex I provides the full list of corporate and decentralised evaluations completed in 2016. The information was used to provide analysis on trends on key performance indicators over the years and the performance of the evaluation function in 2016. Further analysis on the geographic and thematic coverage, type and quality of evaluations is provided under appropriate sections of the report.

<i>Region</i>	<i>Office division</i>	<i>Title of programme evaluation</i>	<i>Quality rating</i>
Americas and the Caribbean	Guatemala	Ampliando las Oportunidades Económicas para las Mujeres Rurales Emprendedoras en América Latina	Very Good
	Regional Office for Americas and the Caribbean (Panama)	Access to Justice as a prevention mechanism to Ending Violence Against Women	Very Good
	Chile	Fortalecimiento de Organizaciones de la Sociedad Civil que promueven la Igualdad de Género 2013-2016	Satisfactory
	El Salvador	Mujeres y políticas municipales a favor de la igualdad	Good
Asia and the Pacific	Bangladesh	Gender and Climate Change project	Satisfactory
	Cambodia	Ending Violence Against Women Programme	Very Good
	China	China Gender Fund for Research and Advocacy	Good
	Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific (Thailand)	Regional Programme on Improving Women's Human Rights in South East Asia	Good
	Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific (Thailand)	Regional Programme on Empowering Women Migrant Workers in Asia (Phase III 2012-2015)	Good
	Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific (Thailand)	Leveraging Technical Tools, Evidence and Community Engagement to Advance the Implementation of Laws and Provision of Services to Women Experiencing Violence in South-East Asia	Good

	Pakistan	Towards Gender Equality Women's Empowerment Home Based Workers, Phase II (2012-2015)	Very Good
	Pakistan	Women's Leadership and Social Reconstruction Programme	Good
	Multi-Country Office for the Pacific (Fiji)	Pacific Regional Ending Violence Against Women Facility Fund	Satisfactory
	Nepal	Strengthening implementation of women, peace and security agenda	Very Good
	Nepal	Localizing women, peace and security agenda in central Terai districts	Satisfactory
Arab States	Regional Office for Arab States (Egypt)	Thematic Evaluation on Women's Political Participation	Good
	Jordan	Promoting Social Cohesion through Women's Economic Empowerment and Protection Initiatives in Irbid and Zarqa	Good
Europe and Central Asia	Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia (Turkey)	UN-Women's Contribution to UN Coordination on GEEW	Very Good
	Moldova	Joint Integrated Local Development Programme Evaluation	Good
	Multi-Country Office for Central Asia (Kazakhstan)	Empowering abandoned women from migrant families in Tajikistan	Good
	Kyrgyzstan (CO)	Building a Constituency for Peace project	Good
Eastern and Southern Africa	Ethiopia	Country Portfolio Evaluation	Very Good
	Tanzania	Country Portfolio Evaluation	Good
	South Sudan	Evaluation of the South Sudan Strategic Note 2014 - 2016	Very Good
	Uganda	Peace Building and Enhancing Protection Systems (Gender Promotion Initiative)	Good

	Zimbabwe	Joint Programme on Prevention of Gender Based Violence Against Young Women and Adolescent Girls	Good
Western and Central Africa	Senegal	Appui à la promotion des droits des femmes et des filles	Satisfactory
	WCARO	Women's Leadership and Political Participation (2011-2015)	Satisfactory
	Senegal	Renforcement des capacités des femmes parlementaires pour une application effective des engagements sur l'égalité des sexes	Very Good
	Mali	Women's Leadership and Participation in Peace Security and Humanitarian Action	Good
	Central African Republic	Programme d'appui au renforcement de la participation des femmes dans les domaines de la Paix et la Sécurité et l'Assistance aux femmes et filles touchées par le conflit en RCA	Good
Headquarters division	Policy Division	The Knowledge Gateway on Women's Economic Empowerment Project (Empower Women)	Very Good
	Policy Division	Financing for Gender Equality	Good
	Programme Division	UN-Women Sida Strategic Partnership Framework 2011-2016	Good
Corporate	Independent Evaluation Office	UN-Women contribution to the United Nations system coordination	Very Good
	Independent Evaluation Office	Regional Architecture	Very Good

Annex II

Evaluation in funds managed by UN-Women

The United Nations Trust Fund

1. In 2016, the United Nations Trust Fund in Support of Actions to Eliminate Violence against Women (the Trust Fund) marked 20 years of global, multilateral grant making in support of efforts to prevent and end violence against women and girls. The Trust Fund was established by the General Assembly in 1996 (resolution 50/166) and is administered by UN-Women on behalf of the United Nations system. In 2016, the Trust Fund supported 107 projects aimed at preventing and addressing violence against women and girls in 77 countries and territories.

2. In 2016, fourteen (14) UN Trust Fund projects implemented by grantees were subject to final external evaluations at a cost of \$183,027. In addition, the UN Trust Fund Secretariat commissioned an independent meta-evaluation and meta-analysis of a sample of 77 project evaluations since 2008, at a cost of US\$26,000.

3. The results of the meta-evaluation showed that there has been a significant improvement in the quality of UNTF grantee project evaluations: 65 per cent of Cycle 13 (2008) project evaluations were assessed to be satisfactory or above according to UN Evaluation Guidelines compared with 82 per cent in Cycle 16 (2012). However, it also found that the expenditure on evaluation varied greatly and lower spending correlated with weaker evaluations. The Trust Fund therefore introduced a recommendation to grantees that at least \$20,000 be allocated for the final evaluation. Furthermore, for a small grants portfolio (projects \$120,000 and under) the evaluation budget and management has been centralised, to be pooled and managed by the Secretariat to ensure that high quality evaluations are produced, with less burden on small non-governmental organizations.

4. The Fund has one dedicated Monitoring and Evaluation Specialist to provide technical support to grantees in preparation and management of their project evaluations; manage evaluations at the UN Trust Fund secretariat level; and develop and implement the Fund's overall M&E system, including results aspects of the online Grants Management System (GMS).

Fund for Gender Equality

5. Launched in 2009, the Fund for Gender Equality is UN-Women's leading global grant-making mechanism and multi-donor fund dedicated to Civil Society Organization programming on women's political and economic empowerment. The Fund sustains, supports and strengthens the capacities of CSOs to implement high-impact and multi-stakeholder programmes that translate law and policy commitments into tangible services for women and girls, men and boys around the world, especially in the most excluded and marginalized communities.

6. Evaluation is a stated priority of the Fund to ensure institutional accountability, learning, and communication of results. Given the nature of the Fund, a decentralized approach to evaluation has been developed in which grant holders, under the guidance of the Fund's staff, primarily undertake strategic evaluations using UN-Women and UNEG standards.

7. In 2016, 7 programme final evaluations were completed and co-managed by the Fund's monitoring and reporting specialists with a total budget of \$69,590. In addition, the Fund started the preparation work for its first evaluation as per FGE Programme document 2014-2017. The evaluation will be undertaken in 2017 with

the main objective of drawing evidence and lessons from the Fund's results and approaches from its seven years of existence that will also feed into UN-Women's future programme and policy planning.

8. Five monitoring and reporting specialists deployed in the field provided technical assistance and support to the grantees conducting evaluation processes. In 2016, the Fund conducted a face-to-face Global Convening for 24 grantees selected in the 3rd call for proposals to strengthen their capacities and enable them to deliver impactful programmes according to the Fund procedures, requirements and vision, stressing the importance of knowledge management and communication around results and increasing the visibility of the Fund for Gender Equality. Grantees and UN-Women Focal Points were fully trained on the Fund's results based management and programme management requirements and reporting systems.
